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European Union

Biotechnology

European Parliament Approves Second Reading of GM Regulations

2003

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Report Highlights:

The European Parliament approved the Second Reading of Regulations on Traceability and Labeling of GM products and Food and Feed. The legislation returns the adventitious presence percentage for approved GM varieties to 0.9% but inserts text on co-existence giving Member States the right to take 'appropriate measures' in this area. The next step in the EU legislation process is for the Council to vote on the European Parliament's amendment.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E2]

At the July Plenary Session of the European Parliament, MEPs voted through the Second Reading of legislation for Traceability and Labeling of GMOs and Food & Feed. This legislation provides the EU with a structure for approving and labeling biotech foods.

The level of adventitious presence of authorized GM varieties was fixed at 0.9%. (Previously, at the Committee stage, amendments lowering this to 0.5% were voted through, see GAIN Report E23081). This means that all foods containing at least 0.9% of approved GM ingredients must be labeled. For unapproved but risk assessed GM varieties, the threshold is set at 0.5% (for three years).

However, there was also the introduction of an amendment on co-existence, permitting the Member States to take "appropriate measures". Co-existence is the issue of biotech, conventional and organic crops growing side by side.

For the Food and Feed Regulation, the amended Regulation is expected to go forward to the Council as an "A" point. A provisional timeline for its official publication would be perhaps late September or early October. It would then enter into application six months after publication.

For the Traceability and Labeling Regulation, the amendments adopted by the European Parliament were discussed at the Council Working Party on the Environment on the 7th July. Most of the amendments from the Committee stage were dropped in the Second Reading. The version of the Regulation voted through by the European Parliament has to be approved by the Council, if this occurs, then the conciliation procedure will be avoided and a similar procedure to that described in the above paragraph can begin. The conciliation procedure could have added at least two months delay to the process. This Regulation would come into application three months after its publication.

It should also be noted that during the next couple of months the Commission will be drafting implementing Regulations, the precise form of which will be critical to the practical implications of the proposals.

Related USEU reports:

Report Number	Title	Date released
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E23081	Update on EU legislation for GMO approvals	5/23/2003
E23057	Commission requests 12 member states to adopt GMO legislation	4/11/2003
E23049	European public skeptical about GM agri-food	3/26/2003
E23029	Commission presents co-existence paper	3/05/2003

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